

# Frequently Asked Questions: Cancelled Instructional Days Issues Requirements 2010-2011

#### 1. What is instructional time?

Instructional time is time in which students are participating in an approved course, curriculum, or educationally related activity under the direction of a teacher. Instructional time includes a reasonable amount of passing time between classes within a single school building or on a single school campus. Instructional time does not include lunch or recess. (IC 20-30-2-1)

## 2. What is an "educationally related activity"?

An "educationally related activity" is a non-classroom activity, such as a field trip or convocation, which meets <u>all</u> of the following criteria:

- a. Is consistent with and promotes the educational philosophy and goals of the school corporation and State Board of Education.
- b. Facilitates the attainment of specific educational objectives.
- c. Is a part of the goals and objectives of an approved course or curriculum.
- d. Represents a unique educational opportunity.
- e. Has been approved in writing by the local superintendent or the superintendent's designee.
- f. Cannot reasonably occur without interrupting the school day.

#### 3. What is the minimum length of a student instructional day?

A student instructional day consists of a **minimum** of five (5) hours of instructional time in Grades 1 through 6 and six (6) hours of instructional time in Grades 7 through 12. (IC 20-30-2-2(a)) Neither statute nor rule dictates the minimum instructional time for Kindergarten. The minimum instructional time for Kindergarten traditionally has been one-half of the instructional time for Grades 1 through 6.

#### 4. Must every instructional day be a full day?

Yes. A calendar day may be counted as a full student instructional day only if the day includes the required minimum amount of instructional time. This means that if students come to school only 180 times during the year, each day must include at least five (5) hours of instruction for students in Grades 1 through 6 and six (6) hours of instruction for students in Grades 7 through 12. There is no option of combining ½ days to count as full instructional days.



## 5. May instructional days be scheduled on holidays or Saturdays?

Yes. The DOE has been asked about holding classes on Memorial Day, Good Friday, and Saturdays etc. The same requirements from Questions # 1 and 2 apply on these non-traditional days for school as well. The requirements for elementary instructional time, five hours not including lunch and recess apply; secondary schools must meet the six hour requirement without including time for lunch.

# 6. May schools use a two hour early dismissal or two hour delayed start to shortened the day on make-up days?

No. Such two hour delays planned in advance to shorten the day are not allowed. Those are used only for extraordinary circumstances such as power outages, gas leaks, water main breaks, weather or other emergency. Schools may shorten a make-up to the required minimum of five or six hours of instruction if they normally exceed these minimums. For example, if a school day normally exceeds the minimum day by 50 minutes every day, schools may shorten the make-up day by 50 minutes to satisfy the minimum instructional time required.

## 7. Must a school corporation provide every student at every grade level with 180 days of instruction?

Yes. State law requires every school corporation to conduct 180 student instructional days. This means that every student in Grades 1 through 12 must have the opportunity to come to school 180 days every school year. The law, however, is not an attendance law. Excused and unexcused absences are determined according to local policy.

## 8. May seniors attend fewer than 180 instructional days to facilitate graduation-related activities?

No. All students, including seniors, must be offered 180 days of instruction. The State Board rule allowing for a senior graduation waiver has expired.



9. Are there a minimum percentage of students who must be in attendance to have the day count as an instructional day?

No. School districts who have to make difficult decisions to make-up classes by extending the school year or holding classes on holidays or Saturdays must make every effort to encourage students to treat these days as any other day of school. Accurate attendance records must be kept for these days.

10. If school hold's a make-up day and absenteeism is high, will it impact the school's AYP?

If a school does not make AYP because of high absenteeism on make-up day(s), the school has the option to appeal the AYP status.

11. Can make-up days be done virtually with students completing assignments on-line and have the day count as one of the 180 required days?

No. The Department of Education anticipates that this may be an available option in future years, but it is currently is not an option.

12. May high schools hold commencement before the actual end of the extended school year?

Yes. Graduation is a ceremony that celebrates the accomplishments of graduates. Diploma covers may be presented to students at the ceremony but the diplomas must not be issued until after the school has completed make-up days to equal 180 days and student records certified.

13. What is the minimum number of student instructional days for Full and Half Day Kindergarten programs?

**Full Day Programs** – Full day kindergarten programs operate on the same basis as any elementary grade program and **must offer 180** <u>full</u> days of instruction. Schools that offer a full day program are funded based on a formula distribution for the 180-day instructional school year. Activities such as, but not limited to, individual screenings and home visits that do not provide instruction to a full class of kindergarten students do not constitute an instructional day.

Half Day Programs – Half day kindergarten programs must offer students 180 <a href="https://half.com/half\_days-of-instruction">half\_days-of-instruction</a>. The Indiana State Board of Education and the Indiana Department of Education permit a school to offer an alternating full day program that operates for 90 full student instructional days. School corporations and accredited nonpublic schools should implement a policy for weather and emergency-related delays that ensures that neither the morning nor the afternoon kindergarten session is affected disproportionately. Activities such as, but not limited to, individual screenings and home visits that do not provide instruction to a full class of kindergarten students do not constitute an instructional day.